

13 July 1971

Dear Harold:

Many thanks for your informative note of the 6th and its equally interesting enclosures.

Our own enclosures here indicate what we've been able to assemble here at the house only. The Mill Valley library is picketed by striking city employees, and the Marin County library is in the San Rafael Civic Center which conducts body searches on all ~~visitors~~ visitors because of the Angela Davis case. No thanks. One thing we wanted to look up was the Spanish word for ~~tuna~~ tuna.

We did presume upon our bookseller and look through her volumes of nursery rhymes looking for a constable from Barnstable. No luck. I also checked on a Gilbert & Sullivan text. I doubt if the search of the Shakespeare concordance will yield anything. Barnstable is a remote and small port on the Cornish coast, on the south shore of the Bristol channel, and seems an unlikely candidate for immortalization by the Bard.

We take the message to Rothstein seriously, if only as a painstaking contrivance by a person with somewhat specialized and rather unusual literary interests and some background.

~~not-~~ The one element in it to which we are unable to find a ~~not-~~unacceptable explanation linked to some not-implausible reference point is the "R.S.P." The best we can come up with here is a possibly simulated confusion between P.S. and R.S.V.P. If this has any validity, the question it raises is whether it was a real confusion, indicating composition during some sort of trip, or whether the effect was deliberately intended. We incline toward the latter, as the same effect appears to be striven for elsewhere as in the jumble of references to food in the second paragraph.

We have no great trouble in the question used as a heading: Can Mr. Weisberg translate? You are the only one of the original well-known critics who is still at it, and the final reference to McGovern is enough to make the administrative assistant of any Democratic Senator such as Gravel find out very quickly just who the hell this Mr. Weisberg is if he doesn't already know. If the postmark date is more than coincidence, it is, as you seem to think, a great deal more than that. It seems gravely deliberate.

However, in the interests of looking at another possible side to this thing, could there not be a motive at work centered on alerting you to the situation? I have mentioned before my impression of the schizoid in your prime candidate for the letter writer. The one thing I feel pretty certain about is that this is not just the idle invention of a riddle. I don't know what the purpose is, but believe it exists and has strong origins and dynamic.

You yourself bring up the possibility that Rothstein was selected because of his address. Is there any hint of the necrophile in your candidate? If so, I feel sure this would be of profound interest to the headshrinkers. Has he ever been known to do anything remotely resembling this before?

I'll deal with other questions elsewhere.

Best,



jdw